

3

M E M O R A N D U M

October 1, 1968

TO: JIM GARRISON, District Attorney

FROM: ANDREW J. SCIAMBRA, Assistant District Attorney

RE: Interview with JAMES J. PLAINE, 1313 Bissonnet Place,
Houston, Texas - a/c 713 - 528-6531

I interviewed MR. PLAINE in his apartment in Houston, Texas, and he gave me the following information. He is 54 years old and comes originally from New York State. (He appears to be well educated, well read, and makes a very good impression.) Mr. PLAINE said that he was involved with what he called the Cuban situation for some years beginning around 1960. He said that he had fought with FIDEL CASTRO when CASTRO was in the mountains trying to gain power. He said later on when CASTRO turned he became involved with the anti-CASTRO groups trying to recapture Cuba from FIDEL. He said he had been contacted by the FBI in regards to the Cuban situation around three years before the assassination.

He said he traveled the country trying to help the Cuban cause by soliciting money and arms and supplies. He said that he took part in the Bay of Pigs Invasion and was known by his code name which was PLAINSMAN. He said many of the guys in the Invasion had code names or war-names and he knew them by those names. He mentioned RALPH CONOJO as a person that he had known with FIDEL CASTRO and who was FIDEL's personal pilot. He also said that he was with ERROL FLYNN.

He said the Bay of Pigs was a disaster and that although the CIA had sponsored it, it completely failed because of lack of air support. However, he said that after the Invasion he was still involved with anti-CASTRO groups who were still trying to liberate Cuba.

He said that he used to hold meetings in his apartment in Houston which were attended by many anti-CASTRO Cubans, some of whom came up from New Orleans. They used to hold meetings and discuss various plans concerning Cuba. The two predominant themes of the meetings were: 1) An assassination plot to kill FIDEL CASTRO, and 2) Another invasion. He said he had a shortwave radio set and a code book which they would use. He said that he's talked with many import and export people from New Orleans and some wealthy oil people from Texas who were interested in assassinating CASTRO. He said some of these people came to him at his house and he talked to some of the others at the Normandy Club which is a rich, exclusive club in Dallas.

He said he cannot be sure but he may have seen SHAW at one of these places. He said his face is familiar and when he looks at his distinguished looks he automatically thinks of the people who used to contact him about assassinating CASTRO. He said he would like to see a picture of him as he looked in 1962 and 1963.

3

(4)

Page -2-

Interview with JAMES J. PLAINE

He said to be perfectly honest he was interested in the plot to assassinate CASTRO. He said that he was told that money was no object and that if he could get the job done he would have all the money he needed. He said a MR. WHITE from Freeport Sulphur was one of the people who contacted him about CASTRO. He said that there were some young Cubans from New Orleans who came up to talk to him. MR. PLAINE seemed very vague about names and said that everyone was on a one-name basis and that he really didn't want to get to know them and he didn't want them to get to know him too well. He said that he could probably recognize some of the people who were at the meetings if he was shown pictures of them. He said in addition to talking about Cuba, they would listen to records and drink and use the shortwave radio.

He said that people were always dropping over to his apartment because he had the reputation of a man who could get in and out of Cuba. He could fly and had flown in and out of Cuba as late as 1963. When I asked him what was he doing flying in and out of Cuba, he just replied that he was doing things for some wealthy people. He said people contacted him for various reasons. He said that one man from Texaco even contacted him in regards to blowing up something for Texaco.

Mr. PLAINE said that he also found out about CASTRO moving money to Czechoslovakia and about the communist planes in Cuba and also the location of the missile sites. He said that he gave this information to the CIA in Houston.

He said the CIA man in Houston that he had contact with was an agent named DULLES. When I tried to press MR. PLAINE further about any CIA connection or involvement, he seemed to not want to make any definite statements.

Mr. PLAINE said that the majority of anti-CASTRO Cubans that he met at the meetings in his opinion were mercenaries and only interested in money and not Cuba. He said there were a lot of pilots from Eastern Airlines and some from Delta Airlines that used to drop in at the meetings.

He said that DAVID FERRIE attended a couple of dozen meetings at his house and FERRIE gave him the impression that he was interested only in the money. When I asked him if FERRIE was CIA, he said that FERRIE never mentioned it if he was. He also said that he didn't think FERRIE was CIA because if he was CIA he would have been down in Guatemala with the rest of them.

MR. PLAINE said that around the Summer of 1963 Cuban activity was almost nil as everyone considered Cuba to be a lost cause. He said that ROBERT F. KENNEDY had really clamped down on the CIA and everybody was afraid to make a move regarding Cuba. He said everyone feared Federal prosecution if they did anything.

(4)

Page -3-

Interview with JAMES J. PLAINE

He said that during the Summer of 1963 he received a "Fair Play For Cuba" leaflet from New Orleans with a note attached to it which said something to the effect of "I will be up to see you soon", signed "LEE". He said that shortly thereafter two young men in their twenties came to his apartment to see him and asked him if he had received the leaflet and the note. He told them that he did. He said the two men asked him about rifles and scopes and elevation and other things pertaining to an assassination. He said he took it for granted that they were referring to FIDEL CASTRO. He said that he put a scope on one of his rifles and took them shooting and they were both terrible shots. He said later on they just returned to New Orleans. He said he doesn't remember the make or color of the car but it had a Louisiana license plate on it. He said that he would stake his life that one of the young men was LEE OSWALD and the other man looked a lot like him. He said that he told this to the FBI and also the FBI picked up the leaflet and the note.

When looking through the pictures that I showed him, he pointed out that THORNLEY looked very much like OSWALD and that THORNLEY was on the same type of the other person with OSWALD. However, he said it was hard to identify people from pictures. He also said the picture of HAROLD SANDOZ looks familiar.

Leslie?
He said that BRADLEY's picture looks familiar and that the name "BRADLEY" rings a bell but he can't place from where. He said he thinks he remembers a BRADLEY who used to be in Cuba and also there may have been a BRADLEY involved with two Cubans who were arrested by the FBI for smuggling guns off Kemah Seabrook around 1962.

MR. PLAINE also said that he talked with JOHN CARROLL who at the time was trying to buy supplies for the Cubans. MR. PLAINE said that he was contacted by the Fair Play for Cuba Committee out of New York as he originally had been with CASTRO before CASTRO turned.

He said that when word got around that he was anti-CASTRO now, many Cubans dropped in to see him. He said that he couldn't trust any of them since he did not know whether they were really anti-CASTRO or pro-CASTRO. As a result, he kept a loaded automatic pistol in his apartment. As I was talking to him, he pointed to the pistol and said that he kept it loaded at all times.

MR. PLAINE said that he had also talked to many Cubans who knew of OSWALD or had heard of him and they all said that OSWALD was a terrible shot. He said this is what prompted him to make that statement in the newspaper.

MR. PLAINE said that after the assassination, the FBI really got on his back and questioned him and many of his friends about the assassination and also they searched the apartment looking for rifles.

Page -4-

Interview with JAMES J. PLAINE

MR. PLAINE said that he would look at any pictures that we may want to show him in an effort to identify some of the Cubans who may have been at his house attending these meetings.

I told him we would probably contact him later on.

Plaine also said that he felt sure that Ruby & Oswald knew each other. He said he just knew.

Now asked me to check this further, esp. with White, but I thought he should. I believe he found the White at the Gratra bank is the wrong White.